

## A B S T R A C T

A 3D model storage means (170) stores the 3D shape data of a target object and illumination base data in advance. A comparison image generation means (110) generates, as a comparison image, a reproduced image  
5 with the target object being arranged in the position/posture of the current estimation value under the same illumination condition as that for the input image on the basis of the 3D shape data and illumination base data. An image displacement distribution detection  
10 means (120) segments the comparison image into partial images (sub-regions) and detects the image displacement distribution between the comparison image and the input image for each sub-region. A posture difference calculation means (130) calculates a position/posture  
15 difference value on the basis of the image displacement distribution and 3D shape data. An end determination means (140) outputs the current position/posture estimation value as an optimum position/posture estimation value (13) when determining that the  
20 position/posture difference value is smaller than a predetermined threshold value. Hence, the position or posture of an object contained in an image can be estimated at a high speed.